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Managing Editor
JAMES O'GARA

Associate Editors
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THE
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A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

NEGROES IN AMERICA

WHAT IS the status of the "race problem" in the United States? The only accurate answer, we are afraid, is that it is very hard to tell.

On the one hand, there is clear evidence of 'progress." Inch by inch, percentage point by per-centage point, American Negroes are undeniably mproving their condition in all sorts of ways.

Economically, more of them are better off. More of them are able to live in housing conditions of some minimal decency. More of them are able to get more and better education. More of them are winning the right to vote, and they are clearly be-coming a more and more potent force in politics.

Segregation in public facilities—libraries, mu-nicipal swimming pools and recreation centers, ransportation, theaters, restaurants—is being chipped away, little by little, in more and more American communities. In the nation's schools, North as well as South, integration is being steadily, albeit painfully, extended.

The Negro's place in the national culture at arge is also, and very obviously, different from what it was only a few years back. The insulting caricatures are disappearing from our movies, car-toons, books, the repertoires of our comedians. Negro writers, artists and statesmen figure in the news as people of dignity and accomplishment.

The cause of equal rights for Negroes is no onger the property of a special group of enthusi-asts. It has become part of the expressed convic-tion of just about every respectable political figure. Martin Luther King, for instance, is almost as much . popular American hero as a Negro idol.

Examples like these can be multiplied almost at will, and they make up an impressive total. In terms of the Negro's situation in this country as short a time as a decade ago, the changes which have taken place in these few years are extraordinary and dramatic. It is easy to use these examples and statistics as proof that the injustices and cruelties of racism are being slowly but surely eradicated.

It is easy to do this, and it would not be unreasonable to do so. But at the same time, sifting through the very same figures and reports, it is impossible to feel any simple satisfaction in the advances we have made in this respect.

IN ONE SENSE, the very norms we use to measure the Negro's "progress"—starting from a base of squalor, poverty, ill health and ignorance—are enough to make any expressions of gratification seem the cruellest and most insensitive irony. The percentage points of economic advance register the enormous degree of exploitation and human abuse still practiced in our society — which remains criminal—just as well as degrees of "progress."

The extent to which Negroes are achieving their Constitutional right to vote—which is in itself pitiful—must be to Negroes as much an occasion of rage and despair as of satisfaction. The integration of schools accomplished in the last seven years is also—proportionately—trifling, quite apart from the fact that it is achieved almost invariably in a storm of violence, hatred and last-ditch resistance. The lunch-counter movement, for all its profound implications, is focused after all on the simple right to be treated as a human being.

For years any observer of the daily agony and humiliation of American Negroes has been forced to wonder how they could persevere in their patience, their charity, their faith. It begins to seem now that their patience and charity may be wearing thin. Today, after the first great breakthroughs have been made, it must become increasingly hard for American Negroes to contain their impatience

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with the maddening slowness and meagerness of the steps taken to give them what is theirs.

The Black Muslim movement is a case in point. This is a frankly racist Negro movement—angrily, bitterly and cynically so. Its leaders have lost patience, have withdrawn their trust from our society—and who can blame them? It must not be forgotten that these are Americans—but Americans who have lost faith in America, in Christianity, in a white man's world.

The rise of the African peoples is similarly pertinent, for it has roused feelings of pride, sympathy and bitterness too in the minds of Negroes in this country. As an American Negro, and not a Black Muslim, observed to James Baldwin, "At the rate things are going here, all of Africa will be free before we can get a lousy cup of coffee."

No, there is not the slightest ground for satisfaction in "the way things are going here." The record—different as it may be from that of a few years ago—remains dismal, scandalous, shameful. All that can keep one from the frustration and despair of the Black Muslims—for that is what their doctrine amounts to—is also supplied, paradoxically and wonderfully, by the Negroes among us. And that is the example of the Negro students, men like the Rev. Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Somehow, heroically and incredibly, they have been able to keep their courage and their faith. And it is with them that our hope must lie.

RESTRICTING FEED GRAIN

OF ALL THE issues John F. Kennedy tackled in his campaign the farm question undoubtedly proved most bothersome. Here was a national issue that had been kicked about for thirty years. No one had yet come up with a convincing answer. Moreover, Mr. Kennedy himself had no special competence on the matter. Accordingly the main prospect the Democrats offered was a change from the unsuccessful Benson approach.

The first of the Administration's tentative commodity-by-commodity approaches (opposed by the powerful Farm Bureau) calls for restricting production of corn and other feed grains. It is an emergency, one-year Congressional measure. Farmers who cooperate by withdrawing sufficient acreages from production of these crops will get higher crop supports and even cash payments; those who do not will not receive crop support payments and are threatened by government disposal of existing surpluses at less than the market price. If half th feed-growers cooperate, there should be no addi tional corn surplus in 1961, and if a majority dc then there will be a reduction of the surplus—th first prerequisite for what Mr. Kennedy and Secre tary Freeman envisage as a stabilized program c soundly utilized abundance.

THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY

IF THE John Birch Society were only a nuisanc in our society one could take note of it an dismiss it. Unfortunately, it is more than a simpl nuisance. It has pretensions to political though and insight; it has attracted members who are i positions of influence; and it has a program c political action which is potentially dangerous.

For some time rumor was far in advance of estab lished facts about the John Birch Society, a condi tion for which the Society itself is responsible, fc it has surrounded itself with an air of secrecy. Cer tain things, however, are clear and definite. Th Society was founded late in 1958 by Robert H. W Welch, a retired candy manufacturer with decide opinions. It is named for a Baptist missionary's so who was killed in China where he was serving as a Army intelligence officer. The stated purpose c the Society is to expose and oppose Communisr in the United States.

These few facts are neither particularly startlin nor interesting. But the views of Mr. Welch an the means by which the group forwards its ant Communist program are. In a book now withdraw from circulation—a book Mr. Welch refers to a "my private confidential letter, written years ag which it has been completely unethical for anyon to quote anywhere"—Mr. Welch said: "But m firm belief that Dwight Eisenhower is a dedicate conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy based on an accumulation of detailed evidence s extensive and so palpable that it seems to me to pu this conviction beyond any reasonable doubt."

One would think that a man so captivated b the conspiracy theory of recent American histor that he could regard Mr. Eisenhower as a Commu nist agent would be regarded with sufficient in dulgence to render him harmless, that he woul attract adherents who would have only statistic importance. Among those listed in the "top gover ing body under the founder," however, are suc familiar names as T. Coleman Andrews, form U.S. Commissioner of Internal Revenue; Spruil Braden, former Assistant Secretary of State; Fath

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Richard Ginder, editor of *The Priest* and a weekly columnist; Clarence Manion, former dean of Notre Dame Law School; Revilo P. Oliver, University of Illinois professor. There are, in addition, several former presidents of the National Association of Manufacturers.

These people have in common a reputation for holding opinions which range far to the right on the political spectrum. But it is difficult to think even they would unite in an effort to impeach Chief Justice Warren because he "voted ninety-two per cent of the time in favor of Communists and subversives" since joining the Court. Or that all of them would work to repeal the Federal income tax. Yet these are two of the immediate objects of the Birch Society. The Society has not yet proclaimed as one of its immediate goals the suppression of civil rights programs, but Mr. Welch has an opinion about them too: they are a cover-up for a movement analogous to the Communist movement.

If the Society is able to arouse sufficient controversy it may prove almost as destructive of sound thought and action as did the late Senator McCarthy. So far, no one in the Society has shown the polemical genius of McCarthy and the Society has not courted publicity as he did. Hopefully the Society may yet decline into the unlamented demise it so richly merits.

But there are several things which temper such optimism. The John Birch Society is only a symptom of the political illness spread through our society. There are others, such as the gullible reception given to the blatantly dishonest film "Operation Abolition" sponsored by the House UnAmerican Activities Committee; the frequent attempts to equate the battles for civil rights and civil liberties with an internal Communist plot; the support, however meager, for Rockwell's fascist rantings. All of these thrive on the theory that an active conspiracy is threatening a self-defined "Americanism," a conspiracy which shelters behind constitutional guarantees too valuable to extend to all citizens.

This illness can be fought only by an understanding first of democracy and then of the threats to which democracy is subjected today. The Birch Society, like all such groups, not only discourages such understanding, it forms part of the threat.

PUERTO RICAN MODEL

IF THE COLONIAL record of the United States in preparing for, and granting, self-government has been exemplary, American administrators and legislators could have done more than they have to raise native living standards. In Puerto Rico this country has engaged in strenuous efforts since before the outset of the cold war, to make up for the past neglect.

From the viewpoint of general economic progress, which is of such basic importance for impoverished peoples, the achievement since 1942 is most impressive. José Moscoso, director of "Operation Bootstrap" has utilized his first-hand experience to recommend methods that have proved effective to the new Committee for Industrial Development of the U.N. With the help of his leadership Puerto Rico has moved from a depressed, raw-material, tropical economy to a highly productive one of seven hundred factories. Tourism has been built up into a source of fifty million dollars annual income. Average life expectancy—a pitilessly revealing index of living standards in underdeveloped countries—has risen from 46 to 70 years.

When so much is being accomplished in Puerto Rico it may seem out of keeping to raise certain questions. To what extent, for example, is this prosperity shared by the families in rural areas there? Aside from sizable emigration to continental United States, all too often to big-city slums, why do so many Puerto Rican farm workers come to these shores for seasonal migratory work under lamentable conditions if their own island is now so prosperous?

There are further questions. Can it be laid wholly to ingratitude, or to a tendency invariably to be dissatisfied, that so many Puerto Ricans desire political independence even today? Doubtless the productivity figures leave out important segments of the story. Those who favor independence are said to be motivated primarily by a desire to preserve a different way of life, a Hispanic-type culture that is in important respects alien to North American ways. It would be good, for instance, to know to what extent the impact of "Operation Bootstrap" on local cultures and social patterns has been foreseen. It would be good to know to what extent the instruction requisite to the manning of the many new productive plants was carried on in Spanish, the language of the Puerto Rican people—if nothing else as a token of interest and respect.

"Operation Bootstrap" has been a tremendous task, and we have no wish to belittle its substantial achievements for the well-being of the Puerto Rican people. If it is to be put forward as a universal pattern for industrialization elsewhere, however, its proponents might well consider a few refinements on the original model.

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QUESTIONS BEFORE THE HOUSE

IN THE DEBATE over federal aid to education, the pitfalls and dangers for Catholics are many and obvious. One of the most serious, in my opinion, would be for us to become so intent on defending the Catholic school system against outside attack that efforts at self-examination come to a halt.

I don't know how many Catholics have any clear idea of the goals of Catholic education in America; I certainly do not. I don't mean the philosophy behind Catholic education; I mean the practical, brick-and-mortar means of implementing this philosophy. Here it seems to me a good many questions remain unanswered, and I think we would be wise to consider them.

Is the slogan, "Every child in a Catholic school," for example, still to be taken seriously? Despite herculean efforts, there is room for only about half the Catholic children in the country in parochial schools today, and all the estimates I have seen indicate that this percentage can be expected to shrink rather than increase in the years ahead. As the great shift of population to the suburbs continues, are we still committed to a desperate effort to find a place for every Catholic child in a Catholic school?

Then there is the question of quality in Catholic education. Whether or not we undertake to build a rash of new schools, we cannot afford to ignore the need to raise standards in existing schools. Despite improvements in recent years, are we not still overly quick to assume that a religious environment is in itself ample justification for inferior academic standards?

Our fathers and grandfathers built the parochial school system at great sacrifice, in order to protect the faith of their children. They did so, however, under different circumstances and in a period when only a minority of the population attended high school. Does our concentration on the first eight grades meet our needs today, when high school is mandatory and even college is coming to be taken for granted?

Is it out of the question for us to consider the suggestions that have been made for a major change in our entire approach? Are we ready to face the fact that all Catholics simply cannot attend Catholic schools from first grade through graduate school? Or are we going to continue to pretend that they can and should, even to the extent sometimes of regarding those who do not as second-class Catholics?

What about the high school situation? If there has to be a choice, many Catholic parents, perhaps most, would consider Catholic high schools more important for their children than elementary schools. Yet we continue to build elementary schools even in those parts of the country where Catholic high schools are a rarity to which only a fraction of the Catholic students can be admitted.

Since more and more public schools are adopting the junior high system, which involves a break after the sixth grade, could not the Catholic children attend the regular public grammar schools, with the parish providing a vastly improved system of after-hours and weekend religious instruction? This would permit existing Catholic elementary schools to be transformed into junior and senior high schools, able to accommodate most of the Catholic children rather than the small percentage who now attend.

I don't know that we have yet reached it, but there must be some kind of limit to what we can do. There is just so much money we can raise, just so many priests and religious we can count on having, just so many qualified lay teachers we can hire. Conceding the past accomplishments of the parochial school, are we so sure the almost total concentration of a parish's effort on children from six to thirteen years old is the best way to use the talents and resources we have? If the after-hours religious training program is not overly successful in many places, is this because of any insuperable difficulty in the idea, or is it because the system is thought of and treated as a second-rate substitute for the parochial school?

As far as that goes, has our elementary school system proved so successful that we should be unwilling to consider any improvements or possible alternatives in the light of changed circumstances? Might we not in fact benefit from a shift in emphasis, away from the parish which concentrates on teaching children to one which regards itself as a missionary center for Christian life and worship, involving the entire family? As a parent, I am inclined to think that educators often overestimate the effect of classroom religion-teaching on young children. Even considering the matter simply from the point of view of education, I'd trade most of the learn-by-rote catechism of the early grades for active, meaningful, parish-nurtured participation in the liturgy by the entire family—and this for the education of adults as well as children.

These are merely questions at random. Most of them are not new, and to many there is no single answer, since a great deal will depend on the part of the country in which one raises them. Nonetheless, I think they are the kind of questions we should be considering. Federal aid or no, in our present situation it seems to me one of the worst things we could do would be to proceed full-steam ahead exactly as we have been doing, precisely because this is how we have "always" done it.

JAMES O'GARA.

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Approaches to Scripture

Some of the more enthusiastic followers of the "new approach" seem to enjoy shocking people

by GREGORY BAUM

THE ADVANCE that has been made in biblical studies among Catholics is a most promising indication of the direction in which Catholicism will develop in this country and a sign of hope for all who are striving for Christian unity. The biblical renewal and the wide interest which accompanies it have come rather suddenly in this country. Apart from scholarly articles for specialists, the literature on the Bible for priests and the educated laity is increasing daily, and the results of the new movement are beginning to be talked about even by those who have hitherto been indifferent to matters biblical. The whole movement has led some writers to speak of "the new look" in scriptural studies.

What is this approach to the Bible which has been designated as the "new" approach? It is, as we shall see, not as new as it may appear to some people. It is a method which, since the beginning of the twenties, has received the name of form criticism. In this approach, the various parts of the Scriptures are compared with other oriental literatures, and by an analysis of style and structure, the literary form of the scriptural passage is determined. Such an analysis will bring to light whether a biblical text is to be regarded as a factual report or an epic, as a poetic commemoration, a parable taken from life, or any of the other literary genres found in the literature of the Near East. Only when we discover the literary form of a piece of writing can we understand the meaning the author intended to convey. This is true for all times. If, for instance, we are unaware that a certain text is really a telegram, we might conclude that the author must have been very angry when he wrote it. Without knowing the literary form of a passage, it is impossible to get at its meaning.

This principle was applied with great success to the Scriptures. Many passages, many books even, which had presented problems in regard to their meaning and the veracity of the narrative have become significant and inspiring documents open to the understanding of all. The majority of the so-called historical problems in the Bible had been due to the fact that the biblical accounts were regarded as chronicles of events in our modern historical sense; their literary form was not discerned. People used to ask, "Did it really happen as it is written down?" "Do we have to accept all this as the truth?" This question is still raised with a degree of discomfort by some people after such terrible Hollywood pictures as "The Ten Commandments."

Applying form criticism to the biblical accounts of the genesis of Israel, we discover that we are here facing a holy saga, a sacred story, a literary device through which the wonderful works of God, His redeeming intervention into His people's history, were announced. There is no author on the American continent who has made this approach better known than Father John L. McKenzie in his book *The Two-edged Sword*. We realize now that the question, "Did this really happen as it is written down?" is not answerable from the biblical account. All we know about these events is what the sacred author wants to tell us, namely the significance of the divine events in the people's history. The problem of chronology, of harmonizing the times and places given in the Bible among themselves and with those found in secular literature, becomes at best a problem for the specialist. It is of no significance to the reader of the Bible. If the same event is reported by two biblical authors, it may well be described differently by them, if the literary form in which they clothe their accounts indicates that they are concerned about the event from different points of view.

FORM CRITICISM was a powerful argument *against* the biblical criticism of the nineteenth century. Then, the Bible was attacked as an authentic

Father Gregory Baum, O.S.A., is a member of the faculty of St. Basil's Seminary, Toronto, and the author of *That They May Be One*.

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source of witness and truth because of the many historical contradictions that could be found in it and the incompatibility of its views on the universe and those of science. Form criticism has taken away the ground on which these critics stood. Apparent contradictions are no longer a problem. They do not detract from Scripture; very often they heighten its significance. They reveal a particular intention of the author, and it is this intention that the exegete must find. If in one gospel Jesus meets one blind man and in a similar context of another gospel he meets two blind men, then the problem of the exegete is not how to harmonize these reports but rather to discover why the first evangelist wanted to tell of the occurrence by referring only to one and the other by referring to two blind men. What we consider the actual historical fact, the exact number of blind men present, is only secondary to the basic understanding of the biblical text, and often the question is not even answerable.

At this point we see how this so-called new approach can lead to results which startle the public. Is the biblical witness no longer historically true? Were there perhaps never any miracles accompanying the liberation of Israel from Egyptian bondage? And what about the miraculous events surrounding the birth of Our Lord? Did Jesus do all the things that are written down? Did He really die for us and rise for us from the dead? The shock which a superficial understanding of the new approach to the Bible could produce is terrible, liable to lead people to doubt, or at least to detach them from the Bible as the book of life. Such a reaction on the part of the public, I hasten to add, is not the fault of the Catholic exegetes who are making the findings of modern scholarship known to larger audiences. But it may partially be the fault of some of their enthusiastic followers who enjoy shocking people, who betray an adolescent joy in being able to say what they were unable to say before. They create the impression that they wish to purge the Scriptures.

The situation gets even worse when preachers use the "new" approach in sermons and study groups as a startling bit of news. "Until now you may have thought that there were three magi in Bethlehem. Well, let me tell you, this is all wrong. The gospel story simply tells us in a special artistic form, commonly found in the literature of that day, that the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament have become true with the advent of Jesus." The people are made to feel that until now they have misunderstood the Scriptures. Having loved the gospel and derived consolation from its pages, they may fear that all was based on fundamental misconceptions. Being thus disappointed, these people all too easily acquire a cavalier attitude towards the Scriptures and begin to ask with reference to other gospel incidents, "Are you going to throw these out too?"

FOR THE SAKE of a better appreciation of the biblical movement, I wish to make two critical remarks on the way in which this research has been delivered to the public.

Some writers create the impression that we now have an entirely new approach in biblical studies. Biblical scholarship begins for them, it almost seems, with Pius XII's encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* and his encouragement of form criticism. They suggest that there has been a leap in Catholic scriptural studies from old-fashioned ideas of literalness to enlightened ideas of poetic truth. People are made to feel that there has been a real break, that ideas on Scripture are labeled by "before" and "after" the new light; you are either in the new truth, or you are out in the old falsehoods of yesterday.

As a matter of fact, the new approach is no new approach at all in the sense of being a turn-about. As is true of all other changes in the Church, it is the result of a steady development. Form criticism of a kind has always been applied to the Scriptures. The Fathers understood much of it intuitively. Before the name of form criticism was invented, Leo XIII used it when he reminded us that the Bible was not meant to be a manual of natural science and hence could not be used as a source of information on matters dealing with natural phenomena. The biblical authors, we were told by Leo XIII, employed the cosmological notions of their environment in order to announce the biblical message of salvation and consolation. When the movement of form criticism got underway in the twenties among German Protestant scholars, Catholic exegetes availed themselves of their work, and even if they were unwilling to follow all the conclusions of the Protestant writers and apply the method to the same extent, they certainly made use of it, albeit tentatively, in their writings.

In countries where ecclesiastical attitudes have encouraged controversy in biblical matters, there has been a gradual evolution of Catholic exegesis in the direction of an intelligent use of form criticism. On this continent, where biblical publications have been more hesitant and conservative, the development has come very suddenly, and the rapid change created the impression that something altogether new had begun in the life of the Church. This impression however is false, and it must not be encouraged by speaking of "the new look" of biblical studies or by opposing antithetically the old wisdom and the new.

The second remark I wish to make is more serious because it touches the nature of the Word of God. While it is legitimate and necessary to examine the human authorship of the Scriptures, to discover the literary forms employed and the social situation in which each appeared, one must not for one moment forget that the Bible is the Word of God spoken into

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our world of darkness. A careless explanation of form criticism may give the idea that certain biblical stories are poetic inventions to symbolize the elevated spiritual ideas of the sacred author. If this were true, then the Bible would teach us things divine through the poetic genius or religious insight of an unusually gifted man. The pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day which, according to the Scriptures, accompanied the people of Israel in the desert would be only poetic symbols which the author selected to express the protection and providence which God bestowed on His chosen people. The Bible would then merely be the word of man about God. But it is our faith that the Bible is the Word of God about God.

THE DOCTRINE of inspiration which the Church has always defended means that the biblical books are not simply human words about God—though they are this also—but that here God is speaking about Himself. God reveals Himself in the Scriptures. In the Bible God can be found not because of the poetry of a saintly writer, but because a divine event in the past is made available, through the inspiration of the book, to all who read and believe. The pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day are not simply symbols chosen by men to proclaim the providence of God. On the contrary, it has pleased God to reveal His providence and protection in the story of the pillars in such a way that the story is not a simple recounting of an historical event, but a telling of a divine event so that it becomes available to all who believe.

If we believe that God revealed His mercy in the pillar of fire then we become related to the divine event in the history of Israel, then we share in the gift that God made to His people through it. One should add that Jesus Christ, claiming to be the light of the world and that those who follow Him would not be in darkness, linked Himself to the divine intervention in the past and announced that He was the new and fuller manifestation of the divine care for His people. Because the Bible is the Word of God and not simply the word of man about God, God's merciful dealings with mankind and His just judgment are made present to those who believe. The Bible is full of power. It is never simply human poetry or human history but God's power becoming manifest and available to those who "eat the scroll," who assimilate the book, who read and understand.

In the light of these considerations it is not important whether the pillar of fire was visible in the desert as are modern searchlights over our airfields at night. What counts is that it is historical in the sense that it reveals and embodies a divine event. An unsophisticated reader of Scripture accepting all the stories in the most literal fashion and firmly believing that God reveals Himself through them has an understanding of the text which is more truly historical than the biblical scholar who would discover the literary forms, reconstruct the occurrences on the plane of human history, but fail to grasp the divine intervention which the story reveals. For this reason it is absurd to go around telling people that they must purge their understanding of Scripture, that they must abandon belief in all kinds of stories related in the Bible. We must lead people to a deep understanding in faith of the history of salvation recorded in the Scriptures so that the question of whether, on the human plane, things actually happened exactly as they are described seems unimportant and irrelevant to them, as unimportant and irrelevant as they seemed to the sacred author.

Seen in this light the new biblical scholarship has enormously enriched our understanding of the Word of God. It is not true to say that modern exegetes have thrown out anything. On the contrary, they have discovered meaning where we were unable to see it before. Through the new biblical movement we do not become poorer in regard to the Bible but richer; we do not lost but gain.

That is to say, the Bible becomes a living book, the locus of the divine Word, the area where we find the divine consolation which God has cast into the world. Many passages which used to be regarded as beautiful and picturesque stories, and to which a spiritual meaning had to be added from without, have become heavy with meaning and divine power. Through the three magi God announces to us His merciful design in regard to the Gentile nations, promised and prophesied in the Old Testament, become a fact through the birth of Our Saviour, and made available to all who believe and follow their star.

ONE DAY OR NIGHT

One day or night I shall have ceased:
Pain will have ended
Or sleep will have had no end.
Nothing left but stump of the candle
And cinders of the timber that was flesh.

But the breath of the sea
Shall mist the cornlands once again,
And gulls will slowly tilt
Towards craft approaching harbor;
While far away the day unrolls
Vast scrolls of sand:
The infinite parchment of the desert,
Creased with rocks, and covered
In dust of anthracite and gold.

AMALIA ELGUERA.

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The YAF's Are Coming

by WILLIAM DUNPHY

AMERICAN conservatism has recently received a shot in the arm, and American liberalism a kick in the pants. Administering both is a new and fast growing national organization called YAF—Young Americans for Freedom. We should point out that "liberalism" in this instance means most positions that are to the left of the political ultraism of Senator Barry Goldwater and William Buckley, Jr.

YAF drew attention to itself for the first time on January 2nd when it dispatched to Washington, D.C., four hundred pickets to picket the *two* hundred pickets demonstrating for the abolition of the House Un-American Activities Committee. The following month YAF again corralled publicity when its Greenwich Village Branch showed the controversial House Committee film "Operation Abolition" to a turnaway crowd in a Village theater. The showing of the film—it purports to document Communist control of the student demonstration at the Un-American Activities Committee's San Francisco hearings last May—was picketed by the Young Peoples Socialist League. The result was additional press coverage for YAF.

For their March attention-getting action, YAF staged what turned out to be a Goldwater-for-President rally. More than 3500 young conservatives jammed New York's Manhattan Center with 6000 more reportedly turned away. Waving aloft huge portraits of Goldwater and clutching strings holding multicolored Goldwater balloons, they grouped around standards proclaiming them to be from, among other schools, Hunter College, Fordham University, Convent of the Sacred Heart, and Harvard. All this, plus hundreds of draped American flags and an American Legion drum and bugle corps, gave Manhattan Center the look of a convention hall.

Ostensibly, the meeting was for the presentation of the first annual National Awards for Contributions to American Conservatism and the Youth of the Nation. Among award winners were the Chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (for Government), the Nationalist Chinese Ambassador to the United States (for International Affairs), the President of the Kohler Company (for Business), Lewis Strauss (for science), William Buckley Jr. (for National Affairs). When Senator Goldwater finally strode on stage, there was a five minute demonstration, punctuated by the rhythmic chant: "We want Barry."

In less than six months, the Young Americans for Freedom have channeled a groundswell of youthful conservatism into more than one hundred campus and precinct-level political action groups numbering over 23,000 dues-paying members. The organization was born last September at a three-day convention held at the Buckley estate in Sharon, Conn. More than one hundred students from forty-four colleges unanimously adopted a charter of conservative principles referred to now as "The Sharon Statement." (On the strength of its principles, YAF has received awards from the All-American Conference to Combat Communism and from the Valley Forge Freedoms Foundation.)

THE ACTUAL birth of YAF, however, began two months earlier in Chicago among leaders of the Youth for Goldwater demonstrations at the Republican National Convention. In a meeting to thank these leaders for their support, the Senator suggested they form a national organization for young conservatives. A thirteen-man, interim committee laid the foundation for the Sharon conference. An un-named mid-western newspaper editor wrote the first draft of the Sharon Statement which, with few changes, was adopted as the credo of Young Americans for Freedom.

One member of the interim committee, now Chairman of the Greater New York Council of YAF, is twenty-three-year-old David Franke. He was fifteen when, after reading John T. Flynn's *The Road Ahead,* he became interested in political affairs. Three years later he was in Washington on a study and research grant with *Human Events,* a right-wing newsletter. During the next three years he worked as a reporter for *Human Events,* research assistant to the National Right-to-Work Committee, executive secretary of the National Student Committee for the Loyalty Oath, assistant editor of the *Young Republican News,* and editor of both the *Individualist* and the *Campus Republican.* In 1960 he became editorial assistant on William Buckley's *National Review,* and went to Chicago as one of the organizers of Youth for Goldwater.

Twenty-three year old Douglas Caddy, National Director of YAF, followed a similar trail into the organi-

Mr. Dunphy, who teaches philosophy at Fordham University, is co-author of *Benedictine and Moor.*

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zation. A New Orleans boy attending Georgetown University in Washington D.C., he moved from campus Conservative and Young Republican Clubs to *Human Events,* to the Committee For the Loyalty Oath, to Youth for Goldwater, to Sharon, Conn. Along the way he became Executive Director of the McGraw-Edison Company's Public Affairs Department, a counterpart in business of labor's political action committees.

Typical of the students who joined YAF at Sharon and who are now devoting much of their time to it is a twenty-six year old Korean war veteran, William Cotter. A conservative for as long as he can remember, he felt an immediate identity with the positions of *National Review*. But, as he recalls, "I got tired of just talking about conservative principles and verbally damning liberal policies. So when the Sharon Conference and its call to action came along, I knew I belonged in YAF." A senior at Fordham's School of Education, Mr. Cotter has just been appointed the full-time Organizational Director of YAF.

One basic condition for membership in YAF is full adherence to the already-mentioned Sharon Statement. This less than four hundred word document is a mixture of generalities and specifics as notable for what it omits as for what it contains. Stating that we are in a time of moral and political crisis, it calls on young conservatives to reaffirm certain "eternal truths." Among them are the dicta that the only economic system compatible with personal freedom is a market economy allocating resources by the free play of supply and demand; that the genius of the American Constitution is summed up in the clause which reserves primacy to the several states, or to the people, in those spheres not specifically delegated to the Federal Government. This credo omits any reference to the common good. It strictly limits government to protecting our political and economic freedoms through the preservation of internal order, the provision of national defense and the administration of justice.

APART FROM the generalities of the Sharon Statement, what does YAF stand for? On the basis of a scorecard of cheers and boos at their March Freedom Rally, some conclusions can be drawn. YAF, or at least 35000 supporters of YAF, are against Communism, Eleanor Roosevelt, "Africa for the Africans," the admission of Red China to the U.N., Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Adlai Stevenson and Dean Acheson, progressive education, Governor Rockefeller, the New, Fair and Square Deals, the New Frontier, Walter Reuther, and the Welfare State. It is for the House Un-American Activities Committee, Burke, Jefferson, Madison, Jay and Calhoun, right-to-work laws, J. Edgar and Herbert Hoover, Senator Jenner, States Rights and Barry Goldwater.

In spite of all this, it is difficult to pin down official YAF policy. For example, with at least a third of the Young Americans' membership drawn from Southern conservatives, their policy committee is reluctant to pass judgment on the student sit-in demonstrations, which have aroused much sympathy on northern campuses. One member of the committee even said that most YAF members felt the Supreme Court's historic school desegregation decision was a tragic blunder. This is not surprising in the light of the Sharon Statement's general position against Federal encroachment on states' rights, and makes meaningful its failure to refer to the common good.

Apart from YAF'S proclaimed opposition to those who would curb or abolish the House Un-American Activities Committee, its only other specific position is opposition to the admission of Red China to the U.N. This follows from the Sharon Statement's judgment that, at present, the forces of international Communism are the greatest single threat to American liberties. (At the March rally, Goldwater said, interestingly enough, that "I think America has something more to fear than the might of Russia and that is inflation.") But the organization's militant anti-Communism sometimes leads to surprising views on foreign policy. For example, some YAFers feel it necessary to glorify France in Algeria, Belgium in the Congo and Portugal in Angola and Mozambique as our best bulwarks against Communist penetration of Africa. One high-up YAF member has said, "The natives won't be ready for true self-government for at least one or two centuries."

Apparently the "eternal truths" concerning the individual's "right to be free from the restrictions of arbitrary force" and guaranteeing the indivisibility of political and economic freedoms, while fiercely defended at home, are not for export.

WHAT ARE the long-range plans of the Young Americans, whose main strength lies in campus conservative clubs? They feel that in order to channel conservative sentiment into political action, they must form neighborhood clubs along political precinct lines. This is one reason why the age limit of members has been raised to thirty-nine years, with special provisions for older associate members. In the March Freedom Rally Senator Goldwater had called for political concentration on nominating and electing conservative candidates in 1962. Through its New York Council, YAF plans to play a role in 1961 municipal elections, thereby providing for its members field experience in political action. They hope to form an effective national political force in time for the 1964 nominating conventions.

For many a disappointed conservative, YAF spells hope. Speaker after speaker, for example, at the March

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rally echoed Taylor Caldwell's prayer, "Thank God for you young people, I never knew you had been born." Too, businessmen from all over the country call YAF's national headquarters asking to be allowed to set up and support local chapters of the organization.

YAF's growth—currently reported at the rate of two-thousand members a month—has brought a set of problems trailing behind. One is to avoid infiltration by the John Birch Society, a secret group that has accused both Dwight Eisenhower (whom YAF holds in little regard, it seems) and Allen Dulles of being top Communist agents. The favorite *modus operandi* of John Birch units, said to be operating in thirty-five states, is to work anonymously within less extreme right-wing organizations. Many of the names listed in their council are also numbered among the advisory committee of YAF. William Cotter, Organizational Director of YAF, has announced that steps have been taken to ferret out John Birch "agents."

Another problem facing YAF is that of creating a positive program of conservative political action. It wants to avoid being captured by any single political faction, even though Senator Goldwater is both their biggest booster and their pet politician. They are also anxious, they say, to avoid being identified with the *National Review*. All YAF's problems are complicated by the fact that business interests contribute the major share of YAF's budget.

It is too early even to guess how successful YAF will be in fighting off the embraces of its warmest admirers—assuming the leaders of the organization, often the carefully cultivated proteges of long-time conservatives, want to fight them off. Future issues of YAF's two publications, *Insight and Outlook* and *The New Guard*, will tell how goes the battle.

At any rate, on many American college campuses and in precinct political clubs, young Americans of more liberal persuasion will be forced, simply because of the activities of YAF, to define and refine their own political positions. This in itself will be a real contribution of the Young Americans for Freedom.

Like some other college teachers, I welcome YAF as a sign of rekindled concern about political matters. But I remain skeptical of YAF's sophomoric approach to complex issues. For example, one of its brochures allows Americans today only two political choices. One is the conservative position based on "eternal truths and principles." The other is "one of the various systems of collectivism—systems which deny morality and truth, systems which have destroyed the freedom of peoples throughout the world." This, plus YAF's oversimplified anti-Communist approach to American foreign policy, makes me wonder how constructive its role will be. Is YAF a genuinely new political voice or, as some have suggested, merely a new political organization out to repeal the twentieth century?

"PEOPLE'S PLAYS"

A Russian Sampler

by GLENN M. LONEY

FOR EUROPEAN theater hits like "Irma La Douce" and "A Taste of Honey" to make the journey across the Atlantic has taken several years. It may be decades, however, before some current Russian successes will be able to survive the journey.

As a tourist, I recently had the opportunity to witness some representative theater fare in Leningrad and Moscow—and it is hardly likely that David Merrick will be fighting for the production rights. The Intourist guides are well aware that there are certain distinct gaps in theatrical taste between Russians and Americans. For that reason, they usually try to steer the theater-loving tourist to an impressive opera, mounted in acres of scenery, or to an exquisitely danced ballet. These have won international critical approval and have proved exportable.

If the foreign visitor *insists* on seeing plays acted in Russian, the most common suggestion will be that he see a great modern classic, such as "Uncle Vanya," at the Moscow Art Theatre, where Stanislavsky's revolutionary practices in acting and staging are suitably enshrined.

For those who plan a tour to Russia, it may be an instructive experience to see a popular Russian play which is not apt to be sold out on Broadway in the near future. One such drama is A. Arbusov's "Irkutsk Story," a new and very popular play about workers on a dam in Central Asia, which I saw played in the Komissarzhevskaya Theatre by a Crimean troupe. A play in the approved "Socialist Realist" tradition, it

Mr. Loney, a faculty-member at Hofstra College, has contributed criticism to the N.Y. *Herald Tribune* and the *Christian Science Monitor*.

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not only exacted energetic performances but also held the audience fascinated.

Author Arbusov is reputed to have become quite wealthy, by Russian standards, through writing such plays. His materials would probably not inspire much response from an American audience, but they do appeal to Russian theater-goers. In this play, as in others of the genre, fundamental issues are nicely avoided; instead, the commonplaces of daily living become the major issues. Although a handsome backcloth illustrated the construction of the great dam at Irkutsk, dramatic conflicts which could arise from completing such a project were ignored in favor of the more domestic problem of which of the construction workers a pretty young cashier should marry. This took a sizable part of the evening, after which, things being biologically much the same for Russians as elsewhere, the heroine presented her husband with children—twins, in fact. At the close, the devoted husband is killed in an accident offstage, perhaps in accordance with the Greek rule about scenes of violence and horror.

These events and the people who retold and played them in a combination of narrative and action seemed to hold the capacity audience enthralled. A variety of Russian types, all dedicated to building a new life in Central Asia, were played by the troupe with great vitality and an attention to realistic detail which compelled belief in the validity of the character, if not in the action. The heroine, as interpreted by L. T. Voiko, was able to make palatable and moving what could have been an episodic soap opera.

During the intermissions, the audience rose from the golden parlor chairs in the stuffy, tightly-packed hall and walked back and forth in the several foyers, splendid in mirrors and marble. Here, nibbling and munching good Russian ice cream, they discussed the merits of the play and disputed the characters' merits. One group might be shopgirls; another, neatly but somewhat shabbily dressed soldiers.

I had hoped to see the troupe's version of Theodore Dreiser's "Jennie Gerhardt," but one of our resourceful guides had planned an opera excursion on that night. It is a loss I very much regret. Considering the misconceptions possible when American groups do Russian plays, it would have been even more revealing to see Russian "Method" actors living the parts in this play.

LATER, in Moscow, at the famed Eugene Vakhtangov Theatre, I noticed that Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn" had been produced with some success, and I was told that the problem of slavery had not been ignored in the adaptation. Production photographs suggested a fairly accurate visual reconstruction of period and character. The play was not currently to be seen, however, and I contented myself with "Sixth Floor," a French import which has had Muscovites clamoring for tickets for several seasons.

A drab, multi-level set, representing apartments in a Paris tenement, was the scene of this dramatic offense by Alfred Gehry. In predictable fashion, a rich student seduced a poor but virtuous girl only to abandon her. (For reasons I could not fathom, the heroine was distinguished by an extraordinary head of platinum hair.) Although Gehry is French, his plot could have been fashioned in Moscow by the Party theorists. The poor girl was naturally saved at the last possible minute both from suicide and shame by a poor but honest worker whose attentions she had previously spurned. The fitting climax was enough to make Karl Marx shudder: the girl, radiant in a beautiful wedding gown, was toasted by the raffish but lovable neighbors on the Sixth Floor.

Such endings may seem strange when one recalls that the Communists were at one time going to dissolve the bourgeois institution of the family. But then the State, too, was going to "wither away," and that is farther than ever from happening. Informants explained to me that the divorce rate is a source of constant irritation to officials. Divorces lead to worker instability, apparently, as well as housing problems. Once a couple have divorced, there is no guarantee that they will be able even in a year to find separate dwellings. The problem, then, is to restore some non-religious sanctity to marriage. This is done by providing official marriage in the ornate halls of some former palace, complete with guests and gifts, which, I was told, can often be purchased on the spot.

"Sixth Floor" aside from its sentimental nonsense, then, may well be an instructional device, designed to reinforce the new doctrines. Making a student the villain of the peace might suggest the beginnings of an anti-intellectual tradition, but great pains were taken to show that he had nothing in common with the dedicated, state-subsidized Russian student. This monster, deceitfully handsome and dressed in tailored clothes, even had a rich mistress whose street garb seemed to include a fortune in jewels.

Nevertheless, spirited acting triumphed over nineteen-century clichés. Not all theaters are dedicated to Stanislavsky realism, and the Vakhtangov players largely ignored "truth to life" in favor of "truth to the theater." Many scenes were broadly played for their farcical values, lines often being "punched" directly to the audience, a device favored by the London director, Joan Littlewood.

OTHER popular Moscow offerings treat the lives of factory workers, collective farmers, war heroes and even such virtually deified figures as Lenin. Unlike our more thoughtful dramas, however, criticism of the society is not a feature of these plays. Non-Socialist

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societies may be cheerfully pilloried, and, indeed, the works of Arthur Miller and Lillian Hellmanová are greatly enjoyed mainly for those negative qualities which may be discerned. Pre-Revolutionary society may also be attacked and lampooned successfully, which has required some actors to brush up on the manners and customs of a bygone era, in order to ridicule them.

The State is not blind to the educational possibilities of theater, and it sees to it that drama, dance, and music are handsomely subsidized. Even the ballet and the opera are not exempt from a teaching function, apparently. In Leningrad, I also saw a relatively new ballet, "Solveig," based on Grieg's "Peer Gynt Suite," and Rimsky-Korsakov's "May Night." A solicitous Russian went to some trouble to explain the sociological significance of the two events. They are both, it seems, designed to show how young men can be temporarily deceived by beautiful chimeras, only to return to the love of pure, simple village maidens. Those who know "May Night" may quarrel with this interpretation, but certain it is that the dancing was excellent; the singing mediocre.

Those fortunate enough to have seen the Bolshoi Ballet in the United States are familiar with the scenic excesses of which the Russians are capable. "Swan Lake," as performed at the Stanislavsky-Danchencko Theatre, was quite as overwhelming as anything at the Bolshoi. Though not modern, the production is a stunning one in the nineteeth-century tradition of illusionistic scenery. That is not to say that scenery was the sole concern of the evening. The legendary excellence of Russian ballet was brilliantly reconfirmed, and Mlle. Vinogradova was an impressive Odette. The smallest details of the ensemble dancing, so often awkwardly or carelessly done in the West, were faultless.

This four-hour-long version was not all dancing, however. Virtually every known trick of lighting and stage machinery was used, occasionally interrupting, rather than advancing the ballet. A house packed with visitors from the West gasped with amazement and delight at such scenic deceptions as the swans gliding across a shimmering lake, their glittering reflections mirrored below them, and the flooding torrents which engulf the stage near the end of the ballet. The immense, billowing waves seemed ready to engulf the audience as well. Such tricks don't have much to do with ballet as such, or possibly even with high art, but they *are* wonderful stage magic.

This sort of theatrical make-believe and the excellent ballet are perhaps the most understandable and exportable Russian theatre commodities. My discovery, however, was that the sentimental "people's plays," for all their crudeness and strangeness to Western ideas of dramatic art, are fascinating, instructive, and at least a novelty worth viewing.

THE SCREEN

IS SWEET

REVENGE, even with action scenes and lush scenery in Technicolor, can get rather tiresome as the main theme of a lengthy movie. And Marlon Brando has made a very lengthy movie: even after half its footage was cut out, it runs to two hours plus.

"One-Eyed Jacks" has a little too much violence for my taste, and I kept waiting for more than the revenge motif, but as westerns go, this one is in the better class. Although it is limited by its story, and is no "High Noon" or "Shane," it shows that Brando, in his first directorial effort, knows a thing or two about movie-making. He may have spent too much money (six million) and wasted too many reels that had to be scrapped, but "One-Eyed Jacks," after being cut down to size, has fluidity and strength, and it manages to hold its audience even after the straight revenge plot has worn itself out.

No doubt in the original five-hour running time the script, written by Guy Trosper and Calder Willingham from a novel by Charles Neider, covered more than the revenge theme and gave greater depth to the main character, a bandit played by Marlon Brando; but "One-Eyed Jacks" must be judged as it now stands. Its story starts in 1880 Mexico with a robbery, after which bandits Brando and Karl Malden flee from the police in an exciting chase that winds up with Malden's running out on Brando. Brando is captured and thrown into prison, and the story ends five years later in Monterey, where Brando, after escaping from jail and joining up with another group of desperadoes, comes to rob another bank and do in Malden, now living in respectability as the sheriff. In these lead roles Brando and Malden turn in fine performances, Brando as the bad man whose good side and change of heart are eventually brought out by the girl he seduces, and Malden as the bad man whose evil and perfidy are only accentuated when covered by a cloak of respectability in the community. They are well supported by Katy Jurado, as Malden's good wife who is unaware of his past and real character, and Pina Pellicer, as Katy's daughter, Malden's stepdaughter, who is seduced by Brando as part of his vicious plot to hurt Malden, but whose genuine love for Brando helps to redeem the man.

While "One-Eyed Jacks" has many effective scenes involving these four characters, and several touching sequences displaying the warm feeling that Brando and his Mexican pal (Larry Duran) have for each other, the film is less satisfactory in characterization than in the sweeping movement and startling beauty of its

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fast-riding episodes and well-assembled mob panoramas. Producer Frank P. Rosenberg and director Brando chose their Mexican and California settings with care; and the spectacular color photography of Charles Lang, Jr. is well integrated into the picture as a whole. Perhaps because it was three years in the making and has been so widely publicized, "One-Eyed Jacks" is approached with too great expectations. Under Brando's thoughtful direction, it is a lively horse opera. With more discipline and careful planning, especially in the story line, and less extravagance, it could have been a much better picture.

THERE is no doubt that Marlon Brando was sincere in his efforts to use cinema well. His achievement is not to be depreciated, but it is unfortunate that as a new director he did not try newer techniques. He might well have learned something from two imports that are now on our screens, two films that are also studies of restless, searching people steeped in immorality. The Italian picture, "L'Avventura" ("The Adventure") was directed and written by Michelangelo Antonioni, who is concentrating on decadence in modern society. In telling the story of three people and their confused love affair while on a holiday in and around Sicily, he combines frank realism, that often goes beyond the bounds of good taste, with poetic imagery that uses extraordinarily beautiful black-and-white photography to put over its statements about sin and guilt in a depraved milieu.

When Anna (Lea Massari) and her good friend Claudia (Monica Vitti) and Anna's lover (Gabriele Ferzetti), an architect who has foolishly been spending his talents and love, join up with their society friends on a yacht, they have no idea what their holiday will lead to, especially since Anna cannot break off from her lover and marriage does not seem to be in the offing. These three and their fast-living friends stop at a barren island. Anna disappears, and as the search for her continues day after day, there and in other places, Claudia and Anna's lover start a relationship from which they cannot extricate themselves. Before this lengthy picture ends, these two are tied in knots of frustration and retribution. Antonioni tells no pretty story in his well-acted film, but it is an extremely thoughtful tale, and if his plot shows the influence of Evelyn Waugh, Eugene O'Neill and even James M. Barrie, its execution also displays the director's flair for surrealistic and imaginative touches in film making. Although "L'Avventura" seems too long and repetitive, Antonioni knows what he is doing in making us participate in his cool analysis of his characters and his concern for today's corruption.

ALSO CONCERNED with the sad state of man's behavior is "Saturday Night and Sunday Morning," an English movie based on Alan Sillitoe's novel and written by the author. Set in Nottingham, it tells the story of a young factory worker who is such an angry young rebel that he makes his predecessors in this field look like dreamers. The role is played to perfection by Albert Finney, whose portrait of toughness, cockiness and self-centered determination is absolutely authentic. But so realistic is it, under Karel Reisz's first-rate direction, that the picture becomes a painful thing to watch.

The brash young man's affair with a co-worker's wife (Rachel Roberts), whom he gets pregnant, and later his relationships with a more respectable young girl (Shirley Anne Field) who hopes to reform him, and with practically everyone else, are actually a series of illustrations of his motto: "What I'm out for is a good time. All the rest is propaganda."

Producer Tony Richardson and his staff have recorded all this with such stinging realism that one begins to wonder what the whole angry-young-men school is leading up to. No doubt this angry young pig's search for the meaning of life deserves consideration; but with previous films of this type ("Room at the Top" and "Look Back in Anger") the audience was aware of the cause of the rebellion and where the rebel was going. At the end of "Saturday Night and Sunday Morning," this young rebel is determined to continue throwing rocks. This movie, as well made as it is, has reached the ultimate in pointless anger. Where do we go from here? PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

THE LADY AND THE MYTH

MRS. JEAN KERR has established so eminent a national celebrity of wit, on terms she has not always been reluctant to exploit, that it is a refreshment to find her new comedy, "Mary, Mary," modulated by the check of sensibility. Time and circumstance, as Mrs. Jean Holzhauer latterly observed in these pages, must ultimately have qualified such modish domestic merriment as has been hitherto Mrs. Kerr's specialty, and one is relieved to find the lady, with her usual perspicacity, seeking the level of her own best self. Indeed, that voyage of discovery forms one of the winsome paths of character along which "Mary, Mary" gently winds, exploring — for which, much thanks—no new abyss, but rather the romantic fancy, rooted in humane feeling, and content to relish the flower of every moment in its droll and salient whimsicality. Her play has charm, *genuine* charm, and what is even rarer in concert with that, an arresting animation of spirit. If she is hardly the

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helpless booby it sometimes amuses her to appear as, outwitted by fortune, man and the beauty parlor, neither is Mrs. Kerr—oh, no, not *ever*—the Sweetheart of Sigma Chi, swinging with vapid allure on the garden gate.

"Mary, Mary" is brushed by that melancholy of all comedy so vibrant with local patois and allusion, the shadow of impermanence: and I must confess—ironically, since I was one of the few to find oppressive the metronome beat imposed by Mrs. Kerr on her earlier farce, "King of Hearts"—that I wish it might have been brushed by the current director, Mr. Joseph Anthony, into a more assertive comic texture. This may be—who can say—only a matter of vocal projection, but certainly as it stands, the audience in the rear of the orchestra is often hard put to eavesdrop on these colloquies of civility.

Above and beyond perhaps all, Mrs. Kerr has had the good sense to restore the antique and wholly honorable custom of writing for certain players, arranging for them, as we say, a vehicle. Only to the egotism of those who know little of art and less of theater will such a practice seem reprehensible. For surely to have allowed us again the image of Miss Barbara Bel Geddes, come riding out of Westchester in sweater and skirt, like a Junior League Joan of Arc; to have swept Mr. Michael Rennie off the Spanish Main and out of Scotland Yard, into the clear statement of so much suave and articulate masculinity; to have turned an affectionate eye on the qualities which Mr. Barry Nelson shares so startlingly with the gentleman in the White House—surely these have more to do with art than, in our vanity, we often care to admit? If I make so much of the point, it is because one of the things we are most profoundly revealed by in life is the quality of our admirations, and Mrs. Kerr is known most happily by the grace of hers. (*At the Helen Hayes.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

COMMUNICATIONS

"IN MEMORY OF ED WILLOCK"

New York, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: I remember Ed Willock too ["In Memory of Ed Willock," by Dorothy Day, Feb. 24] first at the *Integrity* office, a storefront in Yorkville in the late forties. It was a period of religious enthusiasm. Everybody was reading *The Seven Story Mountain,* and at Villanova in the Catholic Action group we were nourished on Canon Cardijn, Cardinal Suhard, the Liturgy, the Active-Contemplative Vocation.

You opened the door and walked in, and everything seemed "right," plain, austere, even poor and worn. The walls were flat white with a touch of blue enamel somewhere, and there was a "liturgical" crucifix. . . .

I was led into the inner office—the back of the store. It was a large room with an old kitchen table in the center. Around the periphery were desks and filing cabinets and bundles of back issues and a stove and kitchen sink. Ed's studio-office was in a corner under a stairway, or maybe it was in a converted closet. Anyhow, he was working on a cartoon. He was of middle height, slender, strong and sensitive. Humor-darts from his blue eyes were always at the ready. He had on a frayed sweater and unpressed pants, and the sleeves of his worn white shirt were turned back two folds. He once said that the proper dress for Christians was old clothes. We talked, probably about the "apostolate." *The Soul of the Apostolate,* like *"Quadragesimo Anno,"* was a much quoted and referred to classic of that "era."

In my private chronology there is a five-year period starting in late 1947 that is called "The *Integrity* Era." It calls to mind Raoul Plus, Leo Trese, Father Raymond, Bernanos, Sheed & Ward—also Pio Decimo, Encyclicals, Liturgy, laity, poverty, Mariology, Advent wreaths, whole wheat bread, the Grail. We talked and smoked.

Then I was asked to lunch with editors, staff, and visitors, the community. There was Carol Jackson, slim, young, immaculately groomed and, well, "spiritual looking." Before we sat down the lights were put out and a candle was lighted in front of a statue of the Blessed Virgin, and a long and elaborate grace followed, as at the Catholic Worker. I think it included the Angelus and concluded with a short hymn sung in French. It was sort of jaunty; it must have been priest-worker.

There must have been about a dozen of us at table sitting on an assortment of old kitchen chairs. I asked whose job it was to make the soup. Ed said, "Mr. Campbell." I did not understand the laughter. "Who is Mr. Campbell?" I asked, looking for someone to compliment, I guess. (I was twenty-six at the time, but quite unbelievable in some ways.) Then Ed explained very gently that we were eating canned soup. Compromises, compromises! But my faith was strong. Aside from this imperfection everything was "right." The way the house on Chrystie Street was "right." (I never saw Mott Street.) And the old guesthouse at Gethsemani. Or Victoria Station in the Early Forties. The conversation was serious but not dour. The crockery chipped and cracked and unmatched. The coffee a little thin. Carol seemed to be the dominant personality at table. Ed sat back comfortably, taking full part, ready for quiet mirth and manifesting no need to prove anything. . . .

I next recall seeing Ed at Maryfarm outside New-

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burgh. He came in a car with a tape-recorder on a summer's afternoon to interview Dorothy Day on the screened porch of the main house there. I think it was part of a project to interview well-known Catholics on social problems. And not long afterwards a visitor drove a few of us down to Marycrest. Ed showed us around the partly finished houses. He seemed to be more weighted with care than on that first day in Yorkville. The concrete, the concrete.

The problems were many and complex. The men and women involved formed a commuity in order to rear their children properly. And they all wanted—and most of them had—many children. And they wanted them to have a lively and creative Faith—and sunlight and fresh air and space. The fact that they wanted and were having extraordinarily large families made them automatically eccentrics on the outside. All the women there had had cruel experiences with hostile women in the supermarket; they were taunted for their fruitfulness. So far there had been no conflict within the community.

But *secondary* considerations brought about conflict. What about the machine? Subsistence farming? What kind of houses? What kind of work schedules? Who had priority? What had priority? Et cetera. As Ed was the leader, he bore the brunt of everyone's concern to have the "right" thing done. And they were all men of good will, well acquainted with the work of St. Thomas and Eric Gill and Belloc and Chesterton and Vincent McNabb and others concerning the machine and industrialism and agrarianism and social justice and the city. Their Catholicism was crucially important to them, and they wanted to make it all go together. They were working on wholeness and trying to retool the clichés. It was hard, very hard.

They weren't just theorizing intellectuals; they acted. One man, for example, gave up considerable middle-class prosperity as an insurance salesman and apprenticed himself as a carpenter; he had a degree from Fordham and must have been in his thirties at the time; he had become convinced of the virtues of manual labor and the evils of capitalism; and he acted. But he didn't make it. After a couple of years he was forced to give up this too-great effort.

Ed spoke of the hardness of the reality. The men in the community found it hard to sustain a schedule of manual labor. They were all office-workers; or at least none of them was a manual laborer. It was easy to discuss building a community; it was hard to drive nails into boards for hours at a time. He remarked that many visitors were repelled by the runny-nosed, dirty-faced children at Marycrest, as these same types were repelled by the outhouses at Maryfarm. Realities. Ed spoke of the difference between order and neatness, pointing to a field that was turning from a pasture into woods which was filled with a variety of bushes and small trees and wild flowers. It wasn't neat, but there was no lack of nature's law and order at work.

When Ed had pretty well recovered from his first stroke it was decided that I would go and be his secretary.

Within a week he had his second stroke and was in hospital for many weeks. Day and night his wife was by his side. And now this most articulate of men had to struggle to syllabify a single word. It seemed monstrous, shocking.

But in the few bright days before this vile encounter with the night began we had some hours of talk, hard and wearying for me. There was no flabby underbelly to his talk; lean and tough and taut. He advanced from premise to premise with ruthless logic—sometimes to uncomfortable conclusions.

He was not a pacifist, nor an anarchist, nor a libertarian. He was a distributist. Opposed to abstract art, Freud, and Marx. One of his less fortunate cartoons showed three devils plotting the demise of man; one was labeled Marx, one Freud. I forget what the other one was; maybe it was John Dewey. Ed was opposed to Capitalism. One of his more successful cartoons illustrated the Seven Capital (istic) Sins: Pride, Greed, Envy, etc. The urban-industrial culture we have here seemed to him to be absolutely "wrong." The next time you're in England visit Bolton near Manchester; then shoot right down to Wells in Somerset. Belloc and Chesterton and Eric Gill and Vincent McNabb were shocked by the contrast. These men helped form Ed's philosophy.

His Catholic Faith was paramount in his formation, of course. But he was very much the layman. He drove me to daily Mass once or twice; but he sat in back passively resisting the idea. (This is not an impression; he said so when we got outside.) Nor did he approve of laymen reading the daily Divine Office. He had little patience with a lot of "spiritual direction." He didn't think that a seminary was a good place to educate a young man for the priesthood. He thought priests should be chosen from among the mature and responsible and formed men of the community. He had someone like himself in mind; and said so.

At one point *Integrity* had a strong position on T.V., "proved" it was immoral. I forget how. But Ed felt it was for the sick and the product of a sick culture. They waged war against advertising, mass media and Madison Avenue long, long before these activities became popular sports. The work of Vance Packard and others seem old hat to old *Integrity* readers.

Of course, Ed was a father, and a loving father—but not a big brother. His view of the role was patriarchal rather than chummy. I doubt whether he ever played football with his sons. He felt that sports were for children and adolescents. But for them he approved of rough body-contact sports of all kinds. He was

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against professional sports. Men should work and find joy in their work—and have work they could find joy in. They should not spend too much time around the women and children. When the day's work was over they should gather together and engage in politics. Politics is brotherhood.

He found great satisfaction in his fatherhood. He would lead his children in grace before meals—singing. And anyone who has not heard the Willock children sing grace has missed one of the delights. It is sung as a round to the tune, "Row, row, row your boat:"

Bless this food, O Lord,
And bless all those who dine,
And feed the poor where'ere they are
On Christian bread and wine.

And his wife would be there at this side, radiant and attentive—so tired but smiling. And what *can* be compared to a valiant woman!

JOHN STANLEY.

SWINBURNE'S PLACE

New York, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Never in my long life have I read such unadulterated nonsense as that of which Bette Richart is guilty in her review [Feb. 17] of Dame Sitwell's Swinburne anthology. I hate to apply the familiar image of a live ass kicking a dead lion, but I see no help for it. To say that "he may have an ear for music, but he has no sense of language at all" is not only in itself contradictory, but is also a confession bringing into question her competence to judge Swinburne; whose poem "The Forsaken Garden" would in itself entitle him a major place among British poets. Admitting his unevenness, there is still an immense bulk of poetical achievement left to entitle him to serious consideration by critics who know their business.

Laurence Binyon, a no mean poet himself, in an Introduction to Swinburne's *Selected Poems* in Oxford's World's Classics series, published recently enough to demonstrate that interest in the poet has by no means waned, begins with the statement that "the first and the obvious thing to say about Swinburne is that he was a man of genius." A little later he notes the fact that his two volumes of *Poems and Ballads* "yield a harvest of lyrics, notable not only for metrical splendor, but sometimes also for hard thought, which are indispensable for a true appreciation of Swinburne."

If Miss Richart considers Binyon a "backnumber," perhaps T. S. Eliot will provide a suitable antidote to her complete misunderstanding of Swinburne: "It might seem to be intimated . . . that the work of Swinburne can be shown to be a sham, just as bad verse is a sham. It would only be so if you would produce

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or suggest something that it pretends to be and is not. The world of Swinburne does not depend on some other world which it simulates; it has the necessary completeness and self-sufficiency for justification and permanence. It is impersonal and no one else could have made it. The deductions are true to the postulates. It is indestructible." Indeed, a place as the last of the great Victorians is conceded him.

Miss Richart finds "everything about Swinburne infuriating." If I did not think her article laughingly absurd, I might be no less infuriated at her article. She could do a far greater service if she "debunked" some of the pretentious moderns with their quite deliberate lunacies instead of attacking a poet who in his way was and still is a major poet among English poets.

JOHN COURNOS.

REPLY

Indianapolis, Ind.

TO THE EDITORS: Since Mr. Cournos has begun the familiar game of confuting critics with critics, I am happy to join him. I summon John Wain in support of my really not at all unique opinion: "Swinburne is that rare thing, a Victorian classic who, after a period of neglect and contempt, has not been rehabilitated. . . . It would be a pleasure to try to give him a hand-up. But unfortunately it just isn't possible. This is surely a case where the Victorians were wrong and we are right. Who would maintain, to-day, that Swinburne was a major poet or even a considerable one?

"He had a strong imagination . . . and a fairly good ear. This ear he employed in the formation of a style which was intended, presumably, to rejuvenate 19th century English poetry and which only succeeded in making it look like a pantomime dame, heavily rouged and mascara'd." However, quoting one critic to disprove another has always seemed to me a bootless game, since anyone can play it any time in any language.

Perhaps I should clarify what I mean by saying he may have an ear for music without having a sense of language. That likewise unrehabilitated American classic, Sidney Lanier, presents the same "contradiction," if contradiction it is, in poems like "The Song of the Chattahoochee," which may as well have been written by Swinburne. The fact that sound without sense can occur in even the best of poets is generally accepted, and is hardly a caprice peculiar to my own way of thinking.

I am not prepared to defend John Wain's competence as a critic, but I am sure he would be as delighted as I am to have made Mr. Cournos laugh. Most book reviews that *I* read put me to sleep. Not Mr. Cournos' though.

BETTE RICHART.

BOOKS

Augustine and Augustinianism in Our Age of Crisis

A GUIDE TO THE THOUGHT OF ST. AUGUSTINE. By Eugene Portalie. Introduction by Vernon J. Bourke. Regnery. $6.50.

THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF SAINT AUGUSTINE. By Etienne Gilson. Random. $7.50.

THE CONVERSION OF AUGUSTINE. By Romano Guardini. Newman. $3.95.

THE MIND AND HEART OF AUGUSTINE. Edited by J. M. Flood. Introduction by M. C. D'Arcy, S.J. Academy Guild Press. $2.45.

By PHILIP DEASY

MORE THAN thirty years ago, in an essay commemorating the fifteenth centenary of St. Augustine's death, Etienne Gilson wrote: "The difficulties which at the present time beset Augustinianism are not an ill for which we need to find remedies, for St. Augustine is not affected by any ill; all that is needed is to return from the Augustinianism of the Augustinians to that of St. Augustine himself." What M. Gilson had in mind was the irresistible tendency of Augustinians to complete what by its very nature must remain in a "fundamental condition of incompleteness." What is an open system of thought, that is, cannot be changed into what is referred to, for purpose of distinction, as the closed systems of thinkers like Aristotle and Aquinas.

When profundity of intellect is combined felicitously, with an equally profound capacity for feeling, as it was in Augustine, with all the magnetism, in fact, of a rich, exciting and impetuous personality, it is not surprising that Augustine attracts many misguided disciples. He has been more fortunate in his adversaries. M. Gilson's proposed solution to the difficulties is, of course, not original with him. He was fully aware of how Aquinas, a better Augustinian than most, had shown the way. Thomas even invoked the authority of Augustine himself in order to support his approach.

Within recent months four books on Augustine have reaffirmed, each in its own individualistic way, how eloquent and penetrating a spokesman Augustine can be for Christianity as the religious way of life today, or put in another way, how satisfyingly he can communicate the plentitude of Christian life. Living as he did in another age of crisis he can help us search our consciences for a proper response to the moral responsibilities of the atomic age. Responding as incom-

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parably as he did to his own individual crisis he can instruct us once again that man can find himself only by finding God.

Father Portalie's Guide is not newly written. It originated in 1902 as an article for a newly projected encyclopedia, *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*. That it should now, more than a half century later, be considered worthy of translation in book form, is in itself an unusual tribute to its scholarly thoroughness and truth.

Starting off with a biography of the saint, *A Guide* continues with a chapter on the various writings of Augustine, and then in the major portions of the book treats the Augustinian doctrine on "The Divine Nature," "Creature and Creation, "Christology," "Grace and Pelagianism," "The Church," and "Augustine's Moral Theology." These chapter titles, as well as the contents, sufficiently indicate the emphasis on Augustine the theologian. With the old-fashioned forthrightness that characterizes the whole book, Father Portalie insists that Augustine's philosophy is so intimately linked with his theology that the two cannot be separated. "Augustine is not the kind of man you can cut in two."

Etienne Gilson's book is not a newly written book, either. It is, as M. Gilson refers to it in his foreword, the "English equivalent" of the second edition (1943) of his *Introduction à l'étude de saint Augustin.*

As all readers of M. Gilson's earlier books on the history of Christian philosophy and on St. Thomas would expect, this study of Augustine is outstanding in its sophistication, wit and profundity, in the aptness of the illustrations from common experience, in the mastery of voluminous sources (the notes and bibliography cover one hundred and thirty-four pages), and most impressive of all, in the marvelous adroitness with which M. Gilson gathers together into a coherent whole the free-flowing "open system" of Augustinian thought. The concluding section of the book, "Augustinism," is, in particular, a remarkable piece of writing, astonishing in its acuity and precise eloquence of expression.

The aim of Msgr. Romano Guardini's work is "to reveal Augustine as the struggling, growing Christian endeavoring to understand himself in faith." To that end Part Two of the book is given over to a superbly wrought explication, book by book of *The Confessions.* As he makes clear in his introduction Msgr. Guardini is especially concerned that any interpretation of Augustine's masterpiece show understanding of what genuine religion is and of what Christian existence is. Part One of *The Conversion of Augustine,* "The Basis of Interpretation," is a more analytical presentation of the concepts used in *The Confessions,* such as Augustine's discussion of the essence of confession and of the memory.

The fourth book on Augustine to be noted, *The Mind and Heart* of *Augustine,* is, as its title page states, a biographical sketch "compiled from the saint's own writings with explanatory notes by the editor." The result is something between autobiography and biography. Since Augustine wrote his own definitive autobiography up until the time of his conversion, Mr. Flood's selections up to that event are taken almost entirely from *The Confessions.* After that the bulk of the material is taken from Augustine's letters and sermons.

In the foreword to *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine* M. Gilson observes that "it is superhuman for a mind to live constantly at the peak of intellectual abstraction. There are times when feeling insists on some satisfaction. . . . An 'angelic doctor' is certain always to please angels, but the common run of men may be excused for craving from time to time the company of a merely 'human doctor.'" Our need, and it is often an overpowering one, is to be charmed and warmed. This is something of which Cardinal Newman, a born Augustinian, was well aware. "He thought from the heart," is the way Msgr. Guardini describes Augustine, "and he created an image of existence which only the heart can compre-

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Gift of Wind Bells

by RAYMOND ROSELIEP

You have given a strand of wind bells, a trinity
the tongue of breeze touches to music at my window.
India, Burma, Siam rear temples in this room:
the natives walk sun-handed with a fruit or flower
offering, the saffron mark on their foreheads shining
god; the pandit blows a conch shell and claps the cymbals,
his priestly vestment lapping as water over rock;
when small boys make their melody upon the dholak
and gharial, the wind bells—your bells, beloved—light
upon the holy hour like a swirl of butterflies
discovering violet bowls to drink from . . and I
cannot pray well in a breaking day loud with splendor.

No one has done much for God who was not much alone with Him in prayer: the text from Father Faber jumbles,
the God-and-I becoming you-and-I ("a pretty
piece of paganism, Mr. Keats"); and I parry,
"We are both branches of Your Vine!" gladly forgetting
how each is subject to that Grafter's art.

Aloneness
settles with the dead breeze, my room is a room, and you
are one in God. I rise to my morning trade, and will
likely stop a child on the street to tell
some elegant fable about Reynard and his bell.

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hend." Father Portalie, who regarded Augustine's influence as "altogether exceptional and unrivaled even by Aquinas," writes of "the white-hot feeling" with which Augustine brings to life "the lofty speculations of his soaring mind."

In our psychiatrist-ridden age this emphasis on feeling is striking. In a short comment on the famous *"tolle, lege"* passage of *The Confessions* Msgr. Guardini writes, "And the terrible cramp [Augustine's heart torment] dissolves, perfectly naturally to the man of antiquity (to his great advantage over us), in tears." But it was not in the extreme of tears only that this man of antiquity held advantage. It was surely in the spontaneous frank display of feeling itself. "Emotional thinking" today is wholly pejorative in its connotation. To become emotional in argument is to lose the argument no matter how valid the viewpoint expressed. Augustine was no one to undervalue emotion or to think of it only in terms of the unruly and the inferior. The cool organization-man mentality would have repelled him as almost approaching a condition of negativity and deadness.

But perhaps Msgr. Guardini's characterization of "thinking from the heart" implies going too far in the other direction. No one reading Father Portalie's and Etienne Gilson's books will raise any question as to how genuine an intellectual Augustine was. There was richness of mind and richness of heart and both were in balance. The Pascalian "God experienced by the heart" or the more famous "That is what faith is: God felt by the heart, not by reason," he would have found unacceptable. Augustine experienced God with his mind, his heart, his total being. As for his faith and *Credo ut intelligam,* there is M. Gilson's reminder that "I believe, therefore I know' is better as a first principle than 'I think, therefore I am. "

The opportunity to present the Christian philosophy of Augustine in so attractive and masterful a way as M. Gilson's book affords suggests a new possibility for quickening the philosophy department offerings in the Catholic college curriculum. It is no longer news that some quickening is needed. Father Gustave Weigel's contribution to the discussion begun by Msgr. Ellis about the state of American Catholic intellectuality included a strong indictment of the way philosophy is taught in Catholic college classrooms. Formulas memorized word for word, but not understood, verbal dexterity in argument, and the consequent smug conviction that he had all the answers from the Church's official Answer Man, St. Thomas, were the typical Catholic college student's acquisitions from his exposure to philosophy.

M. Gilson's book now inevitably raises the question, "How about Augustinism in the Colleges?" Not, of course, Augustinism as in any way superseding Thomism or in the least denigrating the supreme eminence given the Christian philosophy of Aquinas by the Church. My plea would begin by asking that the Catholic colleges restore Augustine to his own proper eminence as a Christian philosopher. The impression now common among undergraduates is that the brilliant but erratic author of *The Confessions* and *The City of God* (two works whose titles, at least, are familiar) after sowing some spectacular wild oats in youth settled down to become a bishop, a saint, and a second-rate philosopher. This is a wholly undeserved fate for one about whom it has been rightly observed, "Augustinism is something else and something more than a Christian philosophy; it is its very charter and enduring model; to be Christian *qua* philosophy a philosophy must be Augustinian or nothing." To which can be added, "If there had been no Augustine there would have been no Aquinas."

Fortunately there is the growing recognition that the philosophical experience is essentially historical. A philosopher, that is, is a man philosophizing at a given moment in history. If a philosophy curriculum is put together on that basis, Augustine, a man of the fifth century, can be given his proper place next to Thomas, a man of the thirteenth century. It may surprise Catholic undergraduates to discover

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that a philosopher is a man. They have long been under the impression that he is a system. At any rate it would appear that Augustine can be more readily presented to the undergraduate as a person philosophizing than can St. Thomas. A young man whose interest in the philosophical life was aroused by something he read at the age of eighteen, who wanted to become a philosopher because he wanted to be happy, because he was profoundly concerned with the very personal problem of his own destiny, and who then built up his whole doctrine out of a continuous commentary on his own personal experience—such an exciting person should have little trouble communicating even to twentieth-century young men how meaningful philosophy can be.

With Augustine abstractions unfreeze into human realities. Philosophy classes should be expected to say something about the relation between philosophy and life. So, of course, should the other disciplines make connections with life in their respective ways. Even literature teachers, after a long period of giving priority to such matters as aesthetic autonomy and form and structure of the literary work, are waking up again to the old-fashioned dictum of Matthew Arnold about literature as a criticism of life. Philosophy is in essence the search for truth, not a mere academic quest. The contemplation of the kind of quest a restless soul like Augustine made should arouse even the callowest undergraduate to realize that the only really genuine philosophy is that which results from a need for it.

With Augustine philosophy was indeed a human activity, totally orientated though it became to an all-demanding God. It was never merely thought in *vacuo,* or even just the speculative pursuit of a knowledge of nature. As M. Gilson notes, "Speculation abounds in Augustine, but its aims are always practical and its term of reference is always man." That is the kind of philosopher an American, above all, perhaps, can understand.

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English Character

IN PURSUIT OF THE ENGLISH. By Doris Lessing. Simon and Schuster. $3.75.

By MAX COSMAN

IN 1949, like the offspring of other Englishmen who had emigrated, Doris Lessing left her particular part of the Empire—it was Southern Rhodesia—to return to the ancestral land. With such appurtenances as a baby son, some twenty pounds in cash, a mess of food tins, and a social sense born of a good deal of Leftist thought, she settled down in the Bayswater-Paddington section of London and proceeded to do two things: glean her teeming brain of the old she had known; study out the nature of the new she had adopted.

A year or so later, having published to some acclaim her first book, *The Grass Is Singing,* and having, it is easy to surmise, exhausted her interest in fellow-lodgers and what not, she moved to pastures fresh. *In Pursuit of the English,* then, is her level, unsentimental look-back, a dozen years later, at a period of life marked by tribulation and achievement, by inner searching and outer observation.

After a number of preliminary pages on, among other things, her father, a "splendidly pathological" character, and on some Cape Town Communist friends lapsed or otherwise, she gets down to the business of reporting what happened when she arrived in a London still rationed, still war-damaged, still antipathetic to British citizens from overseas. "You're not a black?" she was asked when she applied at one rooming-house, and was gratuitously informed, "We don't take Jews either."

Neither Negro nor Jew, she finally secured lodgings in a less limited if far from rosy place, and the rest of her documentary is a series of impressions, almost fictional in quality, of as rambunctious a set of lower-class Englishmen as one may hope to avoid.

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What a crew! They run the gamut from Jack, the untutored adolescent always flexing his muscles in narcissistic concern, to Bobby Brent, the irrepressible conman whose strength lies in his compelling anxiety to force everyone to his will. And on the distaff side we move from Rose, the embittered shop girl yearning to marry a Dickie more eager for nuptial rights than for marital duties, to Miss Privet, the businesslike prostitute who in answer to a question about sex responds, "If you're going to talk dirty, I'm not interested."

Mrs. Lessing's compassion is evident—politically fiery or not she is a humanist—but she pulls no punches in the "pursuit" of her English. Surely, acutely, though by implication rather than by overt statement, her annals of Dan Bolt's spivvy dealings, Flo's several weaknesses, Skeffington's menacing uxoriousness, and, for good measure, children's disturbances or distortions, make their respective points against a confusion of standards, an uncertainty of values, in brief, an unwillingness to abide by what she has elsewhere called "the small personal voice," that is broad enough to take in not only the English but others equally guilty.

Three episodes in particular put them or us, for that matter, to the question. One has to do with Mrs. Skeffington's self-induced abortion. Unable because of her pinched means to face the prospect of another child, she hurls herself down a flight of stairs. The second deals with the "accomplished idling" of some government workers. Sent to replace two panes of glass, they take four days to do the job.

The longest episode—it covers a case brought by the Bolts against a pair of aged and impossible tenants—is the most searching of all. If Rose, coaching Flo how to testify, doesn't reach ethical bottom with her advice, "All this law business isn't anything to do with right or wrong, see? . . . Nobody cares what really happened. All they want you to do is to tell a good lie and stick to it afterwards," it is only because the lawyer with them plummets deeper still when he commends Rose, saying, "You'd do well in law."

In view of such conscienced, untampered-with reportage, highlighted on occasion by reflections like Flo's ("We should all be kind to each other. If we was all kind to each other all over the world it would be different, wouldn't it now?"), one does not find it hard to praise Mrs. Lessing as a writer who with older craftsmen like Lawrence Durrell and more recent ones like Dan Jacobson, Nadine Gordimer, Paul Potts, George Lamming, Samuel Salvon, and Murray Sayle are today forging an English literature as widely reverberating as their foreign origins.

REVIEWERS

Philip Deasy, who is a long-time contributor to The Commonweal, is presently teaching in the English department of St. Peter's College, New Jersey.

Max Cosman, who contributes regularly to a number of literary and cultural journals, has long been a student of the English literary scene.

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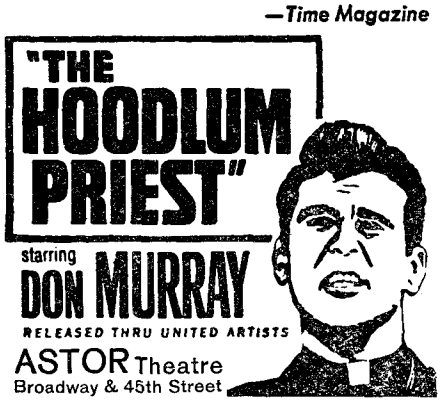

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Notes on a Point of View

OF ALL THE EFFORTS that have been made to summarize this magazine's point of view, perhaps the thumbnail description that comes the closest to the truth remains the statement that The Commonweal represents "not a movement but an attitude."

That attitude is a Catholic attitude, and The Commonweal is generally referred to as a Catholic publication, although it is not, to use the term people apply to diocesan papers and magazines published by religious communities, an "official" Catholic publication. Rather, The Commonweal is, quite simply, a magazine published by men who are themselves Catholic and who endeavor to express a point of view on temporal matters in conformity with their religious principles. . . .

Since the editors of this magazine are laymen, its primary concern is with the temporal order, which is the specific province of the layman. In the light of their religious beliefs, the editors see the temporal order as being directly related to the spiritual, and their day-to-day judgments reflect this conviction.

Add to this the further fact that contributors to The Commonweal include many of the world's ablest Catholic writers, and it is not hard to see what distinguishes this magazine from comparable "secular" journals and why the magazine is generally thought of as Catholic. But there is nothing more "officially" Catholic about The Commonweal than this, and the editors have always gone to some lengths to make this fact quite clear. . . .

There is no secret about the fact that The Commonweal frequently represents a minority point of view—or at least a point of view quite different from that found in many diocesan papers and Catholic magazines. For example, the editors were —and are—unable to share the enthusiasm of most American Catholic publications for Generalissimo Franco. In Father Coughlin's era The Commonweal saw his *Social Justice* as intolerant and totalitarian in spirit, and said so. More recently, while some "official" Catholic publications heaped praise on Senator McCarthy and scorn upon his critics, the editors of this magazine viewed his "crusade" in a context of national fear and self-doubt and felt it had little to do with any rational means of dealing with the Communist threat.

That our opinions on such public questions drew criticisms and disagreement from other Catholics did not surprise us. . . . There is nothing extraordinary about the fact that Catholics frequently disagree on specific questions of the day. Indeed, the only extraordinary thing would be if this were not the case. But what is disturbing is the way some Catholics try to elevate personal judgments on passing events or political figures into dogmas of orthodoxy which all must hold if they are not to be labeled "pseudo" or "so-called" Catholics.

—from the 35th Anniversary issue

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